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ACTION: SS-25

INFO OCT-00 ADS-00 SSO-01 ( AS-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSCE-00  
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EXDIS

EO 12356 : DECL: OADR  
TAGS : PREL, NU, XK  
SUBJ : TOUR D'HORIZON WITH TOMAS BORGE

Dept. of State, RPS/IPS, Margaret P. Grafeld, Dir.  
☒ Release ( ) Excise ( ) Deny ☒ Declassify  
Date 2/27/02 Exemption \_\_\_\_\_

1. ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: IN A MEETING WITH ME OCTOBER 22, INTERIOR MINISTER BORGE STRESSED THE HIGH COSTS FOR THE US OF ANY DIRECT INTERVENTION IN NICARAGUA. HE INDICATED HIS OBJECTION TO ANY PROVOCATIVE ACTIONS BY THE GRN IN HONDURAS AND SAID HE WOULD BE TAKING A DIRECT PERSONAL INTEREST IN WAYS TO GUARANTEE POLITICAL PARTIES' ACTIVITIES. HE ALSO SUGGESTED HE WOULD BE WORKING ON WAYS TO MODIFY PRESS CENSORSHIP. END SUMMARY.

2. IN PREPARATION FOR THE SAN SALVADOR CHIEFS OF MISSION MEETING, I CALLED ON INTERIOR MINISTER BORGE OCTOBER 22 FOR A TOUR D'HORIZON. BORGE RECEIVED ME ALONE IN HIS HOME IN A LOWER MIDDLE CLASS SUBURB OF MANAGUA. WE DISCUSSED AT SOME LENGTH BOTH THE MILITARY AND POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY.

4. I BEGAN BY EXPLAINING MY INTEREST IN OBTAINING AN UP-TO-DATE STATEMENT OF NICARAGUA'S VIEWS BEFORE I MET WITH

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THE SECRETARY ON MONDAY. BORGE RESPONDED BY SAYING THERE WAS ONE ESSENTIAL POINT THAT WE SHOULD KEEP IN MIND. IF THE US INTERVENED MILITARILY IN NICARAGUA, THE COSTS WOULD BE VERY HIGH, NOT ONLY INTERNATIONALLY BUT ALSO IN TERMS OF LIVES. THE REVOLUTION WAS ARMING THE PEOPLE AND WOULD DEFEND ITSELF. HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT THE GRN HAD BEEN VERY PATIENT IN THE FACE OF RECENT ATTACKS. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN JUSTIFIED IN AIDING REVOLUTIONARY GROUPS IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES AT A TIME WHEN SO MANY MEN WERE BEING ARMED AND TRAINED AGAINST THE REVOLUTION. I SAID I HOPED NICARAGUA WOULD NOT TAKE ANY PROVOCATIVE STEPS IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES IN AN EFFORT TO DISRUPT WHAT SEVERAL SANDINISTAS HAD CALLED THE "ENEMY'S REAR GUARD." BORGE INSISTED THAT HE WAS

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PERSONALLY OPPOSED TO ANY PROVOCATIVE ACTION OF THIS KIND.

5. THE CONVERSATION THEN TURNED TO THE RECENT NICARAGUAN PEACE PROPOSALS. I SAID THEY CONTAINED SOME POSITIVE FEATURES BUT MADE NO PROVISION FOR DEMOCRATIZATION OR FOR RECONCILIATION BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND ITS NICARAGUAN ADVERSARIES. THE COMANDANTE IMMEDIATELY SAID THERE WAS NO POSSIBILITY OF SUBSTANTIVE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE COUNTERREVOLUTION. THE ONLY SUBJECT TO BE DISCUSSED WAS THE SURRENDER OF THE CONTRAS. THERE WAS NO PLACE IN NICARAGUA'S POLITICAL LIFE FOR THE EX-GUARDIA OR PASTORA. IT MIGHT, HOWEVER, BE POSSIBLE TO NEGOTIATE A FUTURE ROLE FOR POLITICIANS SUCH AS ARTURO CURZ, ALFREDO CESA AND EVEN ADOLPHO CALERO.

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6. BORGE WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE PERSONALLY CONTINUED TO SUPPORT GENUINE DEMOCRACY AND PLURALISM IN NICARAGUA. HE CITED THE RECENT POLITICAL PARTIES LAW AS PROGRESS BUT ALSO INDICATED THAT THERE WOULD NOW BE DELAYS IN MOVING FORWARD ON THE ELECTORAL LAW BECAUSE OF THE DIFFICULT SITUATION WHICH EXISTED IN THE COUNTRY. I POINTED OUT TO HIM A SENTENCE IN AN EDITORIAL IN TODAY'S EL NUEVO DIARIO WHICH SAID CATEGORICALLY THERE WOULD BE NO REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY IN NICARAGUA.

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BORGE SEEMED SURPRISED, BUT SAID THAT WAS NOT HIS VIEW. THE PROBLEM, HE CLAIMED, IN CREATING DEMOCRACY IN NICARAGUA WAS THE VERY WEAKNESS OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES, BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE GOVERNMENT COALITION. HE SAID HE HAD TOLD HIS INTERLOCUTORS IN EUROPE THAT GIVEN THE WEAKNESS OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES, A STRONG DEMOCRACY COULD NOT QUICKLY BE CREATED. HE REPEATEDLY REFERRED TO THE PROBLEMS OF THE SOCIAL CHRISTIANS, MENTIONING THAT HE HAD HEARD A LOT ABOUT THEM DURING HIS EUROPEAN TOUR, PARTICULARLY THOSE THAT WERE IN JAIL. HE INSISTED THAT THE PSC MEMBERS WHO WERE IMPREISONED HAD BEEN ARRESTED FOR CONSPIRATORIAL ACTIVITIES AND IN ONE CASE, DRUG DEALING, BUT NOT BECAUSE OF THEIR POLITICAL VIEWS. NEVERTHELESS, HE SAID THAT HE INTENDED TO MEET WITH THE SOCIAL CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP TO SEE WHETHER SOME OF THEIR PROBLEMS COULD BE WORKED OUT AND TO CLARIFY THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN

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LEGITIMATE POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AND CONSPIRATORIAL ACTIONS.

7. I SAID THAT, FRANKLY SPEAKING, I THOUGHT IT WAS UNLIKELY THAT NICARAGUA WOULD MAKE MUCH PROGRESS ON ITS NEGOTIATING PROPOSALS IF THERE WERE NOT SOME PROGRESS INTERNALLY. NICARAGUA'S NEIGHBORS SAW A SITUATION THAT WAS BECOMING MORE RADICALIZED AND MORE MILITARIZED. THIS SITUATION WAS A SOURCE OF GREAT CONCERN TO THEM. WHAT WAS NEEDED WAS A RELAXATION OF PRESS CENSORSHIP AND CONCRETE ACTIONS TO DEMOCRATIZE THE REVOLUTION. BORGE ACKNOWLEDGED THE POINT AND SAID HE WOULD ALSO BE LOOKING AT PRESS CENSORSHIP. PEDRO JARQUIN CHAMORRO WAS A SENSIBLE MAN AND HE INTENDED TO SPEAK WITH HIM. THERE WERE ENTHUSIASTS IN THE CENSORSHIP OFFICE WHO OFTEN WENT TOO FAR.

8. I TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE MEETING TO EXPRESS MY CONCERN ABOUT RECENT STATEMENTS BY PHILIP AGEE CALLING FOR ACTS AGAINST THE AMERICAN EMBASSY AND ITS PERSONNEL. I SAID I HOPED THAT THERE WOULD NOT BE ANY HOSTILE ACTION AGAINST US. BORGE IMMEDIATELY RESPONDED THAT NO MATTER HOW DIFFICULT THE SITUATION BECAME, AND EVEN IF THERE WERE WAR, HE COULD ASSURE ME THERE WOULD BE NO VIOLENT ATTACKS ON THE EMBASSY AND THAT OUR SECURITY WOULD BE MAINTAINED.

9. AS I WAS LEAVING, BORGE ASKED ABOUT HIS VISA. I TOLD HIM THAT I WAS AUTHORIZED TO GRANT HIM A VISA BUT HAD NO IDEA ABOUT HIS PLANS. HE MADE CLEAR THAT HE HAD NO IMMEDIATE PLANS TO TRAVEL TO THE US. HE WISHED TO PREPARE THE VISIT CAREFULLY, TO GO WITH ONLY A SMALL DELEGATION, AND TO LIMITED THE NUMBER OF HIS PUBLIC COMMITMENTS. HE COLUNTEERED THAT THE VISIT WOULD NOT BE FOR THE PURPOSE OF MAKING ANTI-AMERICAN PROPAGANDA.

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10. COMMENT: UNLIKE DANIEL ORTEGA LAST WEEK, BORGE WAS ENTIRELY NON-CONFRONTATIONAL. HE MADE NO ACCUSATIONS AGAINST THE US OR THE ADMINISTRATION. HIS ASSURANCES ABOUT HIS DEMOCRATIC PROCLIVITIES, OF COURSE, NEED TO BE TAKEN WITH A MASSIVE GRAIN OF SALT. NONETHELESS, HE SEEMED TO GRASP THE ESSENTIAL INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NICARAGUA'S SECURITY AGENDA AND ITS INTERNAL POLITICAL EVOLUTION.  
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